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TITLE

MARINE FOULING RESEARCH, A STATE-OF-THE-ART REPORT

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AUTHOR

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MARINE SCIENCES DEPARTMENT
U. S. NAVAL OCEANOGRAPHIC OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20390

ABSTRACT

This report is concerned with the present state of research on the ecology of marine fouling communities and the effects of fouling attachment on the performance of underwater equipment. An assessment is made of the amount and types of data in existence, the adequacy of these data, and the research methods involved in collecting and analyzing these data. An annotated listing of references is provided to show the extent and variety of fouling intelligence presently in existence and to provide a basic source of information directly related to practical fouling problems.

BACKGROUND

One of the most serious of the biological activities currently presenting problems to naval operations is the fouling and deterioration of submerged equipment and structures. Biological fouling is the assemblage of marine organisms that attaches to and grows upon underwater objects. The term fouling is generally limited to situations in which the results of the attachment may be considered harmful although there are recognized beneficial aspects as well.

Marine fouling is one of the oldest biological problems known to mariners and is the subject of written records dating to the fifth century B.C. (135). However, modern scientific investigation of sessile organisms did not begin until the mid-19th century when Edward Forbes and C. G. J. Peterson began designating marine biotopes by indigenous species of plants and animals. During this period, Kirchempauer (62) performed what probably was the first comprehensive study of the fouling community when he compiled a list of 84 species from navigation buoys in the Elbe River. The use of test panels was introduced a short time later when Dahl (21) exposed wooden blocks in the Elbe to determine the time and rate of settling of fouling organisms.

FOULING EFFECTS

While the problems of fouling on ships' bottoms are well documented, the impairment of operation or the destruction of other kinds of military hardware by marine organisms only recently has been considered and is less well understood. Fouling will affect the hydrodynamic characteristics of sonar domes, resulting in an increase in water noise (24). Fouling is known to have an acoustic damping effect on underwater transducers, often reducing their sensitivity by as much as 10 db (36, 109, 119). Barham (6) reported that fouling on sound projectors and receivers will cause serious acoustic energy losses. More recently, oceanographic sensors have been affected by fouling organisms. Texas A and M University (107) noted that coelenterate fouling affected the movement of current meter rotors after 63 days of operation in the Gulf of Mexico. The U. S. Naval Oceanographic Office (112) found that after 120 days of unattended exposure in Penobscot Bay, Maine, electrical conductivity cells were desensitized by fouling organisms, resulting in salinity errors in excess of 4.0 parts per thousand.

Fouling has been shown to be damaging to protective coatings intended to reduce corrosion (37, 135). Some fouling organisms increase the corrosion rate of unprotected metal by the creation of oxygen cancentration cells at points of adhesion. This has been shown to cause penetration of 1/16th inch stainless steel (tension) panels after only 111 days of marine exposure (125). The increase in acid metabolic products caused by dying members of the fouling community create a condition favorable to corresion (106). Exposed moving parts may cease to function properly if appreciably fouled (116, 119), and it has been shown that moored mines will dip below

their intended depth after only 6 months because of the increase in resistance to water movement created by fouling growth (72, 110, 117).

While antifouling coatings adequately protect ships' hulls during the periods between drydockings, there are situations where this protection is entirely lacking or short term at best. Windows, sensor covers, moving parts, wire rope and cable, hydrofoil and other high speed surfaces (9), and conduits and water mains (98) are particularly difficult or impossible to protect effectively. A maintenance-free life of from 5 to 10 years required for underwater surveillance systems cannot be guaranteed by the present state of antifouling technology. A knowledge of the fouling community is required, therefore, for the proper design and maintenance of underwater installations.

FOULING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

Extensive field studies have been performed and considerable information on the nature of the fouling community in various parts of the world has been published. These studies generally are fact-finding surveys at single locations to determine such fundamental information as seasonal succession, growth rates, and dominant organisms. These data are sometimes inadequate for the solution of practical fouling problems, however, because of the following serious shortcomings:

- l. <u>Insufficient areal coverage</u> The bulk of fouling investigations have been conducted in the temperate waters of the world. Data from tropical areas are less abundant and data from boreal areas are restricted almost exclusively to the Caspian and White Seas. Fouling data from deep water are almost non-existent; Dr. Sidney Galler of the Office of Naval Research has postulated, "the amount of data available on biological conditions in the ocean is inversely proportional to the depth of water".
- 2. Sites not representative Fouling investigations traditionally are conducted off the ends of piers where the collected data often reflect local extremes of turbidity, pollution, temperature, and fresh water dilution. These harbor areas are not necessarily representative of the biological provinces in which they occur (Fig. 1).
- 3. Measurements not uniform There has been no overall plan of research. For example, fouling data have been collected on wood, glass, slate, bakelite, concrete, steel, asbestos, plastics, and calcareous plates exposed vertically, horizontally, under rafts, or on permanent platforms. Experience has shown, however, that the tendency of different materials to foul is dependent on such variables as surface contour (20,73), texture and composition (7, 14, 91, 100, 132), color (124), and previous history (15). Fouling organisms also are influenced to attach by varying conditions of light (49, 71, 122, 126), water currents (18, 19, 32, 71, 102), gravity (53), stage of tide (38, 126), presence of other sessile organisms (22, 64, 80, 127), and angle of inclination of the surface (53,90). The collected data have been expressed as weight in water, wet weight in air, dry weight in air, alcohol wet weight, ash weight,

volumetric displacement, total volume, percent coverage, thickness, relative abundance, and combinations of the above. Critical evaluation is difficult when comparing investigations performed with different collectors or with non-standard techniques of exposure or analysis.

- 4. Investigations mostly short term Most investigations have been carried out for only one season or one year, which may result in an atypical picture of the biological conditions for that locality. Coe and Allen (15), in summarizing 9 years of observations on the growth of sedentary organisms at a pier in LaJolla, California remarked that "each of the nine years has shown certain peculiarities both in the periodicity and in the abundance of some of the organisms found on the experimental blocks and plates." Loosanoff and Romejko (67) also noted that in 2 of 15 years studied, cyster set was as much as 40 times greater than in preceding years. Research must extend over a considerable number of years before normal or mean fouling conditions can be determined.
- 5. Environmental data lacking Supplementary environmental data are lacking in some investigations. A meaningful fouling program should provide not only data concerning the composition, areal distribution, and seasonal accumulation of the biomass but observations of the chemical and physical environment as well. With the establishment of a productive basic ecological program in the various biological provinces, trends will appear in the occurrence and distribution of various foulers. As parallel trends in the environment become apparent, relationships can be postulated which will facilitate prediction of the type and degree of fouling in areas where no fouling data are available.
- 6. Qualitative information on the effects of fouling limited Very little qualitative information is available on the effects of fouling and biological deterioration on sensors and other underwater equipment. A program to determine these effects is required in order to effectively relate fouling conditions to equipment performance.

FOULING COMMUNITY INDEX

An annotated listing of marine fouling community studies is provided in Appendix I. The term "marine fouling community studies" is defined here as one in which data, primarily concerned with the ecology of the fouling community, are obtained from test panels exposed at depths below mean low water. Presented in Appendix II is a representative selection of fouling investigations in which the ecology of the fouling community was of secondary concern or where surfaces other than test panels were employed. These appendices, plus the references in the text of this report, show the extent and variety of fouling community intelligence presently in existence and provide a basic source of information directly related to practical fouling problems. Not included are references to tidal zone investigations (which are concerned with a separate and distinct biotope) and basic studies of the biology and behavior of individual organisms (which are the subject of an extensive literature and beyond the scope of this report). Bibliographic information on these subjects is available in the Prevention of Deterioration Center bibliographies (92,93,94) and in "Marine Fouling and its Prevention" (135).

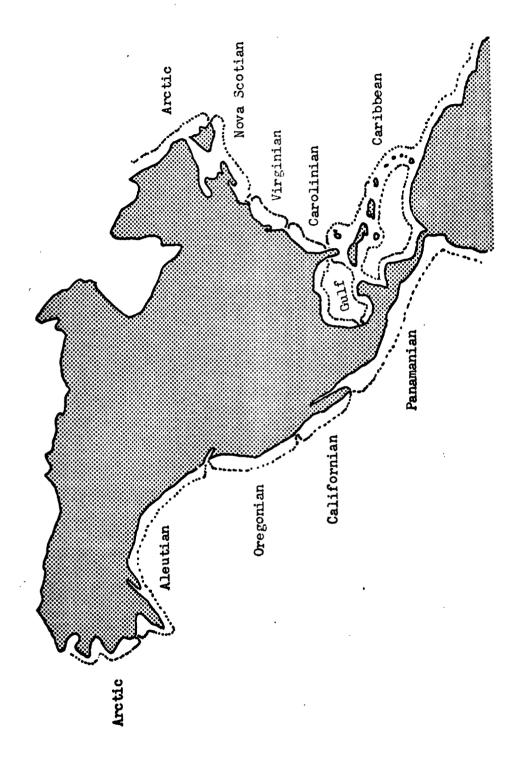


FIGURE 1 - M. JOR DIVISIONS OF THE COASTAL WATERS OF NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA (Principally according to Valentine)

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Appendix I

MARINE FOULING COMMUNITY STUDIES

LOCALITY

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Western Atlantic Ocean Argentia, Newfoundland

Lamoine, Maine

Rockland, Maine

Duxbury, Mass.

Woods Hole, Mass.

REMARKS

depths of 50 to 140 feet for monthly and cumulative intervals up to one year; data expressed as numbers per panel per unit time, percent coverage, relative occurrence, dry weight in air, and rate of growth; temp and salinity data also collected.

Summer months 1943-44; weekly and cumulative shallow collections on asbestos panels exposed at pierside; data expressed as percent coverage, wet weight in air, dry weight in air, and numbers per panel per unit time; temp data also collected.

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1960-64; monthly and cumulative asbestos panels exposed offshore and pierside at several depths to 450 feet; data expressed as percent coverage, wet weight in air, dry weight in air, thickness, growth rate, and numbers per panel per unit time; temp, salinity, plankton, and transparency data also collected.

1942-continuing; various materials exposed at pierside and beneath shallow rafts for monthly and cumulative periods; data expressed as percent coverage, relative abundance, and numbers per panel per unit time; temp and salinity data also collected.

Summer months 1922-32; short-term collections on glass slides, mollusk shells, stones, and bricks exposed at pierside; data expressed as numbers per panel per unit time, relative numbers, and rate of growth.

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| Western Atlantic (Contd) | | , |
|--------------------------|--|--------|
| Woods Hole, Mass. | 1940-41; monthly collections on glass slides exposed at pierside; data expressed as numbers per square foot per month; temp data also collected. | 61 |
| Narragensett Bay | 1955-57; monthly and cumulative collections on mine cases and glass test panels exposed at pierside and in shallow water to depths of 28 feet; data expressed as wet weight in air, displacement volumes, and relative numbers; temp, salinity, plankton, and bottom sediment data also collected. | 81 |
| Patuzent River, Md. | 1962-64; monthly and cumulative pierside collections on wood-asbestos panels; data expressed as percent coverage, numbers per unit area per unit time, ash weight, organic carbon content, and relative occurrence; temp, salinity, nutrients, and oxygen data also collected. | 17 |
| Chesapeake Bay | 1940-41; monthly collections on glass slides exposed at pierside; data expressed as numbers per square foot per month; temp data also collected. | 61 |
| Chesapeake Bay | and 68 feet) on painted steel panels, metal stakes driven into the bottom; data expressed as numbers per square foot per unit time, wet weight in water, wet weight in air, dry | 23, 70 |

REFERENCE #

REMARKS

LOCALITY

1940-41; monthly collections on glass slides exposed at pierside; data expressed as numbers per square foot per month; temp data also collected. Beaufort, N. C.

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1941-42; monthly pierside collections on glass panels; data

Chesapeake Bay

expressed as wet weight in air; temp data also collected.

weight in air, rate of growth, seasons of attachment, and

relative occurrence; temp, salinity, transparency, and current data also collected.

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| LOCALITY | REMARKS | REFERENCE # |
|--|---|-------------|
| Western Atlantic (Contd) Beaufort, N. C. | 1941-42; monthly and cumulative collections made on wooden and glass panels and hearth tiles; data expressed as numbers per panel per unit time, growth rates, and relative occurrence; temp data also collected. | 17 |
| Wilmington, N. C. | 1940-43; monthly cumulative pierside collections made on wooden panels; data expressed as numbers per square foot per month. | 97 |
| Daytons Beach, Fla. | 1942; monthly and cumulative collections made on wooden panels exposed at pierside; data expressed as numbers per square foot per unit time. | % |
| Fort Lauderdale, Fla. | 1962-continuing; monthly and cumulative offshore collections at depths from 50 to 300 feet on wood-asbestos panels, data expressed as numbers per panel per month, thickness, growth rate, percent coverage, dry weight in air, and relative occurrence; temp, salinity, and current data also collected. | & |
| Biscayne Bay, Fla. | 1945-46; monthly and cumulative pierside collections on glass panels; data expressed as numbers yer square foot per month, percent coverage, and growth rates; temp, salinity, oxygen, and plankton data also collected. | 105 |
| Biscayne Bay, Fla. | 1943-47; monthly and cumulative shallow water collections on glass panels; data expressed as number per square foot per unit time and rate of growth; temp and salinity data also collected. | 128 |

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| LOCALITY CONT. | REMARKS | REFERENCE # |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|
| Pensacola, Fla. | 1940-41; monthly collections on glass slides exposed at pierside; data expressed as numbers per square foot per month; temp data also collected. | 1 9 |
| Port Aransas, Tex. | 1940; collections made on glass panels exposed beneath a barge for various periods of time; data expressed as numbers per square centimeter per unit time. | 68 |
| Eastern Pacific Ocean | | , |
| Belboa, Canal Zone | 1957-59; steel panels exposed pierside and offshore at depths from 10 to 50 feet for monthly and cumulative periods up to one year; data expressed as numbers per panel per unit time, percent coverage, thickness, wet weight in air, dry weight, relative occurrence, and growth rates; temp, salinity, and bottom sediment data also collected. | % |
| San Diego, Calif. | 1939-43; concrete blocks exposed for one month periods at pierside; data expressed as numbers per square foot per month and wet weights in air; temp data also collected. | 130, 131 |
| LaJolla, Calif. | 1928-32; wood and concrete panels exposed for varying lengths of time at pierside; data expressed as numbers per square foot per mouth, relative occurrence, and growth rates; temp data also collected. | † I |
| LaJolla, Calif. | 1926-35; glass and concrete panels exposed bimonthly and cumulative at pierside; data expressed as total volume; temp data also collected. | ţ. |
| Is Jolla, Calif. | 1956; wood, plexiglas, vinyl, glass, brass, zinc, stain- less steel, copper exposed for three months at a depth of 45 feet; data expressed as numbers per panel. | ч |

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to one year; data expressed as numbers per panel per month, percent coverage, relative occurrence, dry weight, and rate

of growth; temp and salinity data also collected.

sequence of attachment; temp and salinity data collected.

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| | LOCALITY | REMARKS | REFERENCE # |
|----|-------------------------------|---|-------------|
| | Western Pacific Ocean (contd) | | |
| | Inland Sea, Japan | 1957-58; concrete panels exposed at protected, unprotected, and intermediate shallow locations for varying periods of time; data expressed as numbers per unit time and sequence of attachment. | 57 |
| | Japan | May to November 1954; slate panels exposed in shallow water for short periods of time; data expressed as numbers per square centimeter per unit time and relative occurrence with variously oriented surfaces. | 51 |
| | Indian Ocean | | |
| 23 | Gulf of Mannar | 1952; wooden blocks used for monthly and cumulative exposures beneath rafts; data expressed as total volume. | 65 |
| | Visakhapatnam, India | 1955; asbestos, glass, wood, and cement used for semi-weekly and cumulative pierside exposures; data expressed as numbers per panel per week, relative occurrence; temp and salinity data also collected. | 9 |
| | Madras, India | 1940; glass, wood, cement, and iron panels used for monthly and cumulative pierside exposures; data expressed as numbers per panel per month and relative occurrence; temp and rainfall data also collected. | 84 |
| | Persian Gulf | | |
| • | Mina al-Ahmadi, Kuwait | 1950-53; bakelite panels used for monthly and cumulative exposures at pierside; data expressed as relative occurrence, percent coverage, and numbers per square inch per unit time; temp data also collected. | 84 |

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| LOCALITY | REWARKS | REFERENCE |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Mediterranean Sea | | |
| Haifa, Israel | 1955; steel panels used for monthly and cumulative exposures beneath rafts; data expressed as relative abundance and seasonal sequence. | 63 |
| Golfo di Falmas, Sardinia | 1963-continuing; wood-plexiglas and asbestos panels exposed for periods of up to 6 months offshore, from surface to bottom at 180 feet; data expressed as numbers per panel per unit time, size, thickness, and relative occurrence; temp and salinity data also collected. | 30 |
| English Channel and | | |
| Mersey Estuary, England | 1946-47, flooring tiles and scallop shells used for monthly and cumulative pierside exposures; data expressed as numbers per square inch per month and seasonal settlement. | 16 |
| Millport and Caernarvon, England | 1940; painted steel panels exposed for short periods at pierside; data expressed as numbers per square foot per unit time. | 80 |
| Morvegian and Barents Seas | | |
| Western Norway | 1961; wooden panels exposed for various intervals at shallow locations; data expressed as numbers per panel, time of settlement, and vertical zonation; temp data also collected. | , '^ |

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data expressed as occurrence or lack of occurrence only.

June to August 1921; oyster shells exposed at pierside;

also collected.

Spitzbergen

| LOCALITY | REMARKS | REFERENCE # |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Ekaterininskaya Bay, Barents Sea | June to September 1934; concrete panels exposed at shallow locations for various short periods; data expressed as wet weight in air; temp data also collected. | 136 |
| Caspian Sea | | |
| Various sites, Caspian Sea | Observations of occurrence and distribution of fouling organisms attached to ships, underwater structures, and glass panels exposed for varying periods of time during 1951-61. | 101, 13 |
| South Atlantic Ocean | | |
| C Table Bay Harbour, South Africa | 1946-49; experimental plates exposed for short periods at shallow locations; data expressed as numbers per panel, rate of growth, and sequence of settlement. | . 4L |
| South Pacific Ocean | | |
| Lyttleton, Australia | 1954-55; test panels exposed at shallow locations for long and short periods; data expressed as numbers per panel, rate of growth, and sequence of settlement. | 102 |
| Sydney, Australia | 1947-57; bakelite and perspex panels used for monthly and cumulative exposures under rafts; data expressed as relative occurrence, numbers per panel per unit time; temp and salinity data also collected. | × |
| Sydney, Australia | 1948; glass panels exposed for short periods at pierside; data expressed as numbers per panel per unit time and relative occurrence. | 134 |

| LOCALGER | REMARKS | REFERENCE |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| South Pacific Ocean (continued) | | |
| Sydney, Australia | 1947-57; bakelite and perspex panels used for monthly and cumulative exposures under rafts; data expréssed as relative occurrence, numbers per panel per unit time; temp and salinity data also collected. | 133 |
| Deep-Sea Areas | | |
| Atlantic Ocean | 1961-continuing; wood-asbestos panels exposed for periods of 48 to 57 days at various depths to 5,500 meters; data expressed as relative occurrence with depth. | 108 |
| Atlantic Ocean - Bahama Islands | 1961-continuing; wood-asbestos panels and various materials exposed for periods up to 111 days at various depths to 1700 meters; data expressed as relative occurrence with depth, size, and thickness. | 27, 28 |
| Pacific Ocean | 1962-continuing; various materials exposed for 4 months on the bottom at 5,640 feet; data not yet reported. | 94 |
| Pacific Ocean | 1962-continuing; panels exposed for extended periods of time at deep-sea test sites; data not yet reported. | п |

APPENDIX II SUPPLEMENTARY FOULING INVESTIGATIONS

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| LOCALITY | REMARKS | Regerrance |
|---------------------------|---|---------------|
| Wrightsville Beach, M. C. | Fouling observed in conjunction with research toward thermal control of fouling. data expressed as occurrence of various species. | 95 |
| Wrightsville Beach, M. C. | See Duxbury, Mass. above (Appendix II). | ౙ |
| Charleston, S. C. | Fouling observed on floating drydock removed from local harbor area; species and wet weight in air noted. | 69 |
| Biscayne Bay, Fla. | Fouling observed in conjunction with research directed toward electrical control of fouling; data expressed as occurrence of various species. | य |
| & Biscayne Bay, Fla. | See Duxbury, Mass. above (Appendix II). | 18 |
| Greenland | Early 1900 observations of fouling on buoys. | 88 |
| Mid-Atlantic Ocean | | |
| Bermuda | Studies of the effects of deep-sea environment on rubberized fabrics exposed at depths from 200 to 16,000 feet; data not yet reported. | 103 |
| Atlantic Ocean | Studies of the effects of deep-sea environment on General Electric Corporation array components at depths to 5,500 meters; data not yet reported. | 10 |
| Caribbean Sea | | |
| Guartansmo Bay, Cuba | Fouling observed in relation to periodicity of attachment to metallic samples; data expressed as occurrence of major groups. | 911 |

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LOCALITY

Caribbean Sea (contd)

Sen Juan, Puerto Rico

Bahama Islands

Gulf of Mexico

Texas Coast

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Eastern Pacific Ocean

Balboa, Canal Zone

San Diego, Calif.

Redondo Beach, Calif.

San Clemente Island

REMARKS

Fouling observed on mine cases and cables exposed for periods up to 6 months offshore; data expressed as relative occurrence of major groups. Fouling observed on cable and hydrophone mounts exposed on the bottom at 5100 feet for 16 months; data expressed as occurrence of major groups with depth.

with varying amounts of paint, asphalt, antifouling costas relative occurrence and zonation; legs were protected oil drilling platforms in shallow water; data expressed 1948-49; fouling observed on steel legs of offshore ings, and sacrificial anodes.

corrosion tests; data expressed as occurrence of major Fouling observed on metal panels in conjunction with

See Duxbury, Mass. above (Appendix II).

of fouling research; data expressed as occurrence or Fouling observed in conjunction with thermal control absence of fouling attachment.

various periods of time at offshore locations; data not Fouling observed on mine cases and cables exposed for yet reported.

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for monthly and cumulative marine borer studies; data Fouling observed on wooden panels exposed at pierside

expressed as relative occurrence of major groups of

fouling organisms.

REFERENCE

Eastern Pacific Ocean (contd) San Francisco, Calif.

LOCALITY

Dutch Harbor, Alaska

Pacific Ocean

31

Eastern Atlantic Ocean

English Channel

English Channel

Plymouth, England

Estuarics, England Temar and Mersey

Studies of the effects of deep-sea environment on rubberdata expressed as occurrence of major groups and season Fouling observed in conjunction with corrosion studies; ized fabrics exposed on the bottom at 5,000 feet for of attachment.

periods of 6 months to 2 years; data not yet reported.

Fouling observed on a sunken ship recovered after 6 months on the bottom at 280 feet; data expressed as relative abundance.

England and Lisbon, Portugal; data expressed as occurrence Fouling observed on submarine cable recovered after warying periods of time at 500 to 1200 feet between Falmouth,

23

Fouling observed on metal panels used as controls in antifouling paint studies at shallow locations; data expressed as occurrence, season of attachment, and numbers per square foot per unit time; temp data also collected.

various periods from 12 to 15 months in shallow water; data expressed as relative occurrence; salinity, tidal, and 1930-37; fouling observed on channel buoys exposed for pollution data also collected.

83, 84

LOCALITY

Eastern Atlantic Ocean (contd)

Der Helder, Netherlands; Portsmouth, England; Trondeheim, Norway; Curchaven, Germany; Ostend, Belgium; Drobek, Morvey;

Abidjan, Ivory Coast. La Pollice, France; Chertourg, France;

Mediterranean Sea

Casablanca, Morocco

Rovinj, Yugoslavia; Genoa, Italy; Margeille, France Toulon, France; Haifa, Israel;

South Pacific Ocean

Aukland, New Zealand Sydney, Australia;

REMARKS

See Duxbury, Mass. above (Appendix II).

lengths of time up to 2 years offshore at depths of 25 to 90 feet during 1942-45; data expressed as rela-Fouling observed on mines exposed for various tive occurrence.

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See Duxbury, Mass. above (Appendix II)

See Duxbury, Mass. above (Appendix II).

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Various Sites, Sea of Azov

Pre-1961; studies of fouling attachment to ships hulls; data expressed as periods of attachment and wet weight in air; temp, salinity, and light penetration data also collected.

General

South America, the Caribbean Sea, the Medierranean Sea, the Pacific Islands.

Fouling organisms reported on wooden panels exposed at pierside for monthly and cumulative marine borer studies; data expressed as relative occurrence of major groups (occasionally to species) and percent coverage; occasional temp and salinity data also collected.